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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR AF/E AND ACTING A/S CARTER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [SO](#)

SUBJECT: SOMALIA - DOUBLE SUICIDE ATTACK ON AMISOM

SUMMARY

¶1. (SBU) Summary: On February 22 two suicide bombers struck inside AMISOM's Burundian battalion base at the former Somali National University (SNU) compound. Eleven Burundian soldiers were killed and 15 wounded. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack through spokesman Mukhtar Robow. Though accounts vary, our AU contacts told us the two attackers were employees of a Somali contracted to supply food and fuel. They had been working for the Burundians for nine months, and gained entry to the camp based on this relationship. The attack casts suspicion on Somali contractors on AMISOM bases. End Summary.

Two Bombers Attack
Burundian Contingent

¶2. (SBU) On February 22 two suicide bombers struck inside the Burundian AMISOM base at the former SNU compound. Eleven Burundian soldiers died and between 15 were wounded. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attacks. Our AU contacts explained that two employees of Issa Mohammed Jama, a Somali contract supplier of food and fuel to the Burundian camp, entered the camp in a vehicle at approximately 9:00 a.m. Based on their months-long relationship with the Burundians, the two were apparently admitted without inspection. They parked the vehicle near a building in which troops were attending church. The vehicle passenger disembarked and positioned himself in or near a busy cafeteria in the camp. Evidently aware of the soldiers' Sunday routine, at approximately 10:00 a.m., as soldiers departed the church service, the vehicle driver detonated his explosives. Nearly simultaneously the bomber on foot detonated his explosive vest in the cafeteria. There is currently no information that contractor Jama knew of the attack. According to several accounts, insurgents nearby then launched eight mortars in the direction of the camp. That attack was largely ineffective, according to our AU contacts.

¶3. Speaking to the media via telephone moments afterward, al-Shabaab spokesman Mukhtar Robow "abu-Mansur" revealed many of the attack's aforementioned details. He named Ahmed Sheikh Don Sidow Wehliye as the bomber who was on foot, and Mursal Abdinur Mohamed "Shikshigow" as the vehicle bomber.

Burundian's Lax Security

¶4. (SBU) Post contacted TFG Police Commissioner Abdi Hassan "Qeybdiid" and Mogadishu Mayor Mohamed Osman "Dagahtu," for comment. They separately told us that they've long considered Burundian AMISOM forces as generally more lax in security than the Ugandans, and that sadly this attack came as no surprise. Qeybdiid commented that Burundi's two battalions were concentrated in one location and had insufficient checkpoints and protective measures to prevent committed attackers from gaining entry to the most densely populated parts of the camp. Qeybdiid told us that he once asked their general to spread out his troops. Qeybdiid said the Burundians were open and friendly with locals; this openness may have been used against them in this case. AU sources separately told us AMISOM is reconsidering its use of local contractors.

¶5. (SBU) Comment: Given that three AMISOM troops were killed in all of 2008, this attack is likely the worst against AMISOM since its deployment. Our AU contacts said a lack of intelligence hampered their general situational awareness, and was especially marked on February 22. AU sources told us the Burundian defense minister reacted with resolve to the attack, saying they would not submit to al-Shabaab pressure to withdraw. End Comment.